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PM commends PAEC's health services; terms serving humanity as noble cause

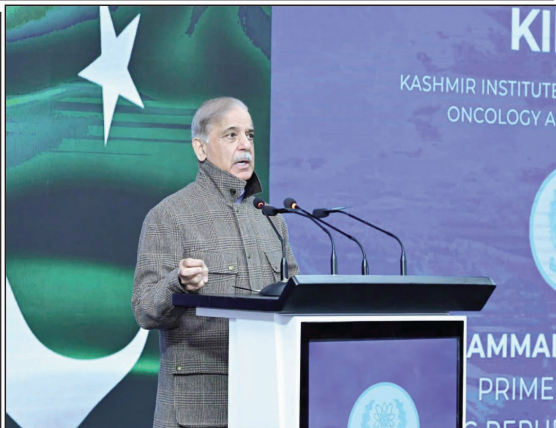
PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday, while appreciating the contributions of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission's (PAEC) in the health sector, termed provision of treatment to the cancer patients with the latest facilities as the 'biggest service to humanity.'

Addressing an inaugural ceremony of Kashmir Institute of Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiology (KINOR) in Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, he said that there could be no better profession and noble cause to serve those at their doorsteps who had to travel from Muzaffarabad and other remote areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to Islamabad for getting

treatment for the life-threatening disease.

In his remarks broadcast live on national TV channels, he commended the great efforts of PAEC and other related authorities. He said that they should realize the pains and sufferings of those who had no resources to meet expenses for the treatment of fatal diseases like cancer. Citing his personal experience, the prime minister said that he himself was a cancer survivor and its treatment was expensive, adding that they should consider the sufferings of those patients who came from the remotest parts of the country to big cities for the treatment and could not meet the expenses. Lauding PAEC's services, he stressed upon taking further steps and doing more to contain the disease 'by giving a smile.'



MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the inaugural ceremony of Kashmir Institute of Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy.

Bilawal Bhutto urges PTI to abandon extremism, return to democratic politics

PEAK POINT



LARKANA: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should abandon extremist politics and operate within constitutional boundaries.

Speaking to the media in Larkana, Bilawal said that extremism does not offer solutions to national problems and that genuine progress and stability can only be achieved through dialogue and democratic norms. He stressed that political parties must work together to create space for constructive politics in the country.

The PPP chairman also advised the federal government to prioritize the public-private partnership (PPP) model to address economic challenges, particularly fiscal constraints. He said that if the federal government wants to effectively tackle the economic crisis, it should learn from Sindh's successful experience with public-private partnerships.

Bilawal highlighted that Sindh's public-private partnership model has received international recognition.

Muslim, Arab countries ministers unequivocally reject Israel's recognition of Somaliland; flay it for blatant disregard for int'l law

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Muslim and Arab countries, in a joint statement, unequivocally rejected Israel's recognition of the "Somaliland" region of the Federal Republic of Somalia, citing the serious repercussions of such unprecedented measure on peace and security in the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and its serious effects on international peace and security as a whole, which they said also reflected Israel's full and blatant disregard to international law.

The joint statement was shared by the Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan with



media on Sunday.

The joint statement included Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti, the Republic of The Gambia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, the State

and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. "Their condemnation in the strongest terms of such recognition, which constitutes a grave violation of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, which explicitly stipulates the imperative of protecting the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity, and reflects Israel's expansionist," the statement said. They also reiterated full support of the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Somalia, and the unequivocal rejection of any measures that undermine the unity of Somalia, its territorial integrity or its sovereignty over its entire territory.

Pakistan will not send forces to Gaza to disarm Hamas, says DPM

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said on Saturday Pakistan was willing to contribute to an international peace-keeping force in Gaza, though it would not deploy troops to disarm or de-weaponise Hamas. "If they say that we should go and start fighting, disarm Hamas, de-weaponise them, and go and destroy the tunnels that Hamas has built until now, that is not our job," Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told reporters during a year-end briefing in Islamabad. He emphasised there was clarity between civil and military leadership.

Sikh activists clash with Hindu protesters outside Bangladeshi HC in London

PEAK POINT

LONDON: A demonstration outside the Bangladeshi High Commission in London on Saturday briefly turned tense when pro-Khalistan Sikh activists and a small group of Hindu protesters confronted each other, prompting police intervention. The Khalistan Movement wants an independent Sikh state carved out of India and dates back to India and Pakistan's independence in 1947, when the idea was pushed forward in negotiations preceding the partition of the Punjab region between the two new countries. The protest was held in connection with reports.

Pakistan reclaims strategic significance in 2025, outshines India: Global journal

PEAK POINT

CHARLOTTE: Pakistan has successfully restored its strategic importance on the global stage in 2025, leveraging its geographic location, defense capabilities, and diplomatic initiatives, according to a report by Carolina Political Review.

The report highlighted Pakistan's strengthened position in international politics, particularly following the May conflict with India, which showcased Pakistan's military resilience and enhanced its credibility. Effective diplomacy during this period also helped Pakistan restore confidence in



Washington, providing a fresh momentum to bilateral ties.

Carolina Political Review noted that Pakistan's location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, Western Asia, and the Middle East has made it a pivotal player in regional geopolitics. Strategic assets such as the Gwadar port in Balochistan have further elevated the country's importance, opening avenues for port and mineral

cooperation, as well as economic opportunities linked to CPEC.

The report also cited the U.S. Trump administration's National Security Strategy, which identifies Pakistan as a key partner in advancing U.S. global interests. During heightened India-Pakistan tensions, the U.S. actively engaged in de-escalation, highlighting Pakistan's growing diplomatic leverage

while India lagged behind. On the economic and strategic front, Pakistan and the U.S. signed agreements worth \$500 million covering rare earths, mineral refining, and processing. Additionally, EXIM Bank approved \$1.25 billion in financing for mineral projects in Balochistan's Reko Diq region, signaling new investment and employment opportunities. Carolina Political Review noted that Pakistan's strategic diplomacy and economic engagement with the U.S. in 2025 have reinforced its role as a key regional actor.

Party would move towards dialogue after ensuring level-playing field provided through street movement: PTI

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The PTI on Sunday denied opting to engage in dialogue with the government as an underdog but said that it will do so "after ensuring a level-playing field is provided to it through street movements", according to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and the PTI Secretary-General, Salman Akram Raja. CM Afridi, along with other provincial ministers and members of the assembly, is in Lahore to launch a new street movement, as per the directives of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan. In a discussion with senior journalists at a private residence in Lahore's Defence Housing Authority, Afridi asserted that reconciliation was impossible without resistance. "We will be at a loss if we enter into dialogue without resistance. So, the protest movement will continue until the rulers come to the table after recognising the opposition as an equal partner," he said. Responding to a question whether the party had perpetually been protesting without yielding any result, CM Afridi said, "This time, we will not make tall claims but do practical work and come up with a positive output." Secretary-General Raja said no political party could go into a blind alley. "We are seeing that the government want the PTI to neither speak about its election fraud, the release of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan, nor question institutions' interference in politics and journalism.





SPORTS



PCB to take up Indian U19 team's unsportsmanlike conduct with ICC



PEAK POINT
 LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi has said the Board is in the process of filing an official complaint with the International Cricket Council (ICC) against the unsportsmanlike conduct of the Indian cricket team during the recently concluded Asia U19 tournament. Addressing a press conference at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Sunday, he said if the Indian U19 team did not shake hands with the Pakistan team, the gesture will be reciprocated, adding that the conduct of the Indian team was against the spirit of the gentleman's sport.

Pakistan beat Indian U19 team in the final of the Asia Cup but Indian team's conduct was controversial. It all started when the Indian Men's cricket team refused to shake hands with the Men in Green during the Asia Cup 2025 referring to the estranged political relations between the two governments in the wake of alleged Pehlgam attack in Indian-held Kashmir and downing of Indian warplanes by the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in April and May this year. "PCB wishes to keep cricket and politics apart under the instructions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif," he said, adding that all sporting rela-

tions with India will be on equal footing. He said Indian cricketers will be paid in the same coin in future and all matters will be dealt with as per the rules. Praising performance of the Pakistan youth teams, Mohsin Naqvi said Pakistan Shaheens and U19 teams have recently done well, adding that the PCB wishes to nurture young talent so that strong player replacements are available. He said U19 cricketers will be groomed in such a manner to harness their talents while PCB has started school cricket so that the raw talent could be discovered at an early stage. He said cricket clubs

are being scrutinized through a renowned international audit firm KPMG. Naqvi also claimed to start work on Asia's best cricket academy at the NCA. On PSL 11, PCB Chairman said former fast-bowling great Wasim Akram has been appointed brand ambassador of PSL 11 and he will lead the auction of the two new franchises at the Convention Center, Islamabad on January 8. He said 10 bidders have qualified for the auction process, expressing the hope that the interest shown by different groups during the roadshows in London and New York will reflect at the auction.

PCB announces squad for Sri Lanka T20 series, Shadab Khan makes comeback



PEAK POINT
 LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced a 15-member national squad for the upcoming three-match T20 International series against Sri Lanka, with all-rounder Shadab Khan returning to the team after recovering from shoulder surgery. According to a PCB press release, Salman Ali Agha has been appointed captain of the Pakistan T20 side for the Sri Lanka tour. Wicketkeeper-batter Khawaja Muhammad Nafi has earned his maiden call-up to the T20 squad, marking a significant milestone in his career. The squad includes Salman Ali Agha, Fakhar Zaman, Khawaja Muhammad Nafi, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Salim Mirza, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Shadab Khan, Usman Khan and Usman Tariq. The Pakistan team will depart for Sri Lanka in phases on January 4 and 5, 2026. All three T20Is will be played at Dambulla, with matches scheduled for January 7, 9 and 11. The series is expected to play a key role in shaping Pakistan's squad for the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup.

PCB to take over owner-less Multan Sultans for next PSL season



PEAK POINT
 ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Multan Sultans will be operated by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) itself during the upcoming 11th edition of the tournament, the board's chairman Mohsin Naqvi announced on Sunday. The decision comes amid a protracted dispute between the board and the franchise's former owner, Ali Khan

Tareen, whose agreement was not renewed after he was deemed non-compliant due to public criticism of the league's management. Multan Sultans introduced as the sixth team in 2018 and historically the most valuable franchise — acquired initially for a significantly higher fee than others — won the PSL title in 2021 and reached multiple finals. However, tensions escalated over the past year as Tareen repeat-

edly voiced concerns over transparency, governance and communication within the PSL setup. The PCB responded with legal notices, accusing him of breaching contractual obligations, while Tareen threatened counter-legal action and ultimately decided against renewing ownership, citing principles. Speaking at a press conference at Gaddafi Stadium, Naqvi said: "This year, the PCB will operate Multan Sultans itself. After the end of the next PSL season, God-willing, we will hand it over to its next owners after an auction process." He added that an "acting head" for the franchise would be appointed within the next eight to 10 days, preferably a professional cricketer to ensure smooth operations. The development coincides with the PSL's expansion to eight teams for its 2026 edition — the league's first major restructuring since Multan Sultans joined seven years ago. The auction for the two new franchises is scheduled for January 8 in Islamabad, following the shortlisting of 10 technically qualified bidders from domestic and international investors.



LAHORE: A view of match between teams of Uni Software and Intouch during round match of 7th Edition of Corporate Challenge Cup here on Sunday.

Hamza Zahoor fires Pakistan U-19 to thrilling win over Afghanistan

PEAK POINT
 HARARE: A sensational unbeaten 68 from Hamza Zahoor guided the Pakistan Under-19 team to a thrilling one-wicket victory over Afghanistan in a final-over thriller at the Harare Sports Club.

Showing nerves of steel, the 18-year-old Hamza slammed the first ball for four to tie the scores and hammered the third delivery to the rope again, finishing on 68 from just 51 balls (eight fours, one six) and sending the Pakistani camp

into delirium. Earlier, Afghanistan had posted a competitive 226 all out in their 50 overs after Pakistan opted field first. Afghanistan built on opener Osman Sadat's 75 and a solid 49 from captain Mahboob Khan. Pakistan's bowlers kept chipping away, with all-

With Pakistan staring down defeat at 201-9, the right-hander masterminded a last-wicket stand of 29 runs, hitting the winning boundary with three balls to spare to seal a memorable chase of 227 in their tri-series match. Needing 26 from 25 balls with only number eleven Niqab Shafiq (one not out) for company, the wicketkeeper-batter Hamza took complete control. He shielded his partner expertly, farming the strike and targeting crucial boundaries. A six off pacer Abdul Aziz in the 46th over ignited hope, before the equation boiled down to five runs from the final over bowled

by Zaitullah Shaheen. Pakistan's chase had been precarious throughout, crumbling to 42-3 before captain Farhan Yousaf (65) steadied the innings. However, a collapse triggered by Salam Khan (4-44) saw four wickets fall for 33 runs, setting the stage for Hamza's dramatic rescue act. The victory reinforces the champion pedigree of the Pakistan U-19 side, fresh off their Asia Cup triumph where they defeated arch-rivals India in the final.



LAHORE: FG ASEAN, the Winning team of Patrons Cup Final match receiving trophy from chief guest the 14th Lahore Open Polo Championship here on Sunday.



15 Billion rupees' worth of timber rotting on Afghan Border as senate flags chitral's forest crisis

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: A Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination meeting laid bare a stark environmental and governance crisis in Chitral, revealing that timber worth up to Rs15 billion has been lying unused and rotting for years along the Pak Afghan border after large scale illegal logging during the militancy era. Officials warned that while the smuggling has been halted, the ecological damage remains unresolved and Chitral continues to lose forest cover. The disclosure emerged when the committee took up the Chitral agenda during a delayed session, prompting the chair to remark that the meeting was

"saved by Chitral" after other agenda items failed to materialize. A representative from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Forest Department, Chitral Forest Division, briefed the committee on the region's fragile forest situation. According to the briefing, Upper and Lower Chitral together span 148,638 hectares, but only four percent of this area is classified as government owned forest. Unlike other parts of KP, Chitral does not operate under a Wood Lot Policy, which elsewhere allows private landowners to grow and sell conifer trees under regulated management. Chitral's population relies almost entirely on the limited government forest. The most alarming issue highlighted was the destruction of

Arandu Forest near the Afghan border. Officials said the forest remained largely intact until 2004, after which widespread illegal cutting began during the period of militancy and cross border smuggling. An estimated 3 million cubic feet of timber was felled, of which around 1.5 million cubic feet was smuggled into Afghanistan. The smuggling only stopped in 2015 after the deployment of the Pakistan Army. The remaining 1.5 million cubic feet of already cut timber is still lying on the ground in Arandu, exposed to decay. Forest officials estimated its current value at between Rs12 billion and Rs15 billion. A formal case has been sent to the federal cabinet seeking permission to sell this timber, with the proposal

that the proceeds be used to fund a large scale reforestation drive, described as a new "Billion Tree Tsunami" specifically for Chitral's ecological restoration. Officials stressed that no new trees would be cut and the proposal only concerns timber already felled. The committee also examined the pressures driving deforestation at the local level. Officials said the limited forest area supports the basic needs of the population, with around 150,000 cubic feet of timber legally provided each year for local construction. Fuel wood, however, remains a critical issue. Due to extreme winters and the absence of gas and reliable electricity, residents depend heavily on forests for heating and cooking. Committee members

acknowledged that without viable alternatives, locals are effectively forced to burn forests to survive. The chair directed relevant ministries to urgently explore renewable energy and clean technology solutions for Chitral, noting that without alternatives, conservation efforts would fail regardless of enforcement. When broader forest statistics were discussed, officials initially cited an overall increase in KP's forest cover, but the committee clarified that Chitral is an exception. Officials conceded that Chitral's forest cover has declined by 0.6 percent over the past two decades, largely due to the Arandu deforestation during the militant period. The meeting also heard that international funding has

been secured to support recovery. A development bank initially proposed an irrigation project for the region, but the Forest Department argued that irrigation would be ineffective without securing the upper watershed first. The bank subsequently agreed to redirect funding, approving Rs900 million specifically for reforestation efforts in Chitral. The committee concluded that Chitral's case reflects a broader failure to protect ecologically sensitive border regions during years of conflict, warning that without swift decisions on the stranded timber, alternative energy for locals, and sustained reforestation, the environmental cost will continue to rise long after the security threat has subsided.

Chairman CDA reviews Shaheen Chowk Underpass project

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, paid a visit to the Shaheen Chowk Underpass project and reviewed the ongoing construction work, inspecting various sections of the site.

Officials briefed the chairman that the project has entered its final stages ahead of schedule, with over 95 per



cent of development work completed.

They informed him that the structural work has been finalized, while finishing works are progressing at a fast pace.

The briefing further highlighted that landscaping and horticulture work is being carried out around the project to enhance its aesthetic appeal.

In addition, permanent decorative lighting is being installed to further improve

the outlook of the underpass.

Expressing satisfaction over the pace and quality of work, Randhawa said that high construction standards had been ensured alongside timely completion.

He directed the concerned departments to expedite all remaining beautification works and complete them before the inauguration.

The CDA chairman said the Shaheen Chowk Underpass would provide signal-free movement for

students of nearby educational institutions as well as daily commuters, resulting in significant savings of time and fuel.

He added that the project would help reduce traffic congestion in the federal capital and improve overall travel facilities.

"Providing modern infrastructure and the best possible travel facilities to the citizens of Islamabad remains one of our top priorities," he said.

Opinion & Editorial

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Blood, soil, and broken cradles: The silent screams of shikarpur

Marvi Mustafa, PhD scholar and lecturer

In the dust-blown reaches of Upper Sindh, the value of a human life has been reduced to the letters of a surname. In Shikarpur, the names Mahar and Jatoi are no longer just markers of ancestry; they have become death sentences or badges of a burden no soul should have to carry.

While the state discusses "security protocols" and "strategic interests," thousands of families are living in a permanent state of mourning. This is not a war of choice; it is a war of inheritance.

The Weight of a Name: To be born into this feud is to be born into a debt of blood. We often hear the statistic thousands dead but we don't hear the silence of the abandoned classrooms in Lakhri or the ghost towns near the riverine forests.

The Inheritance of Grief: In the homes of both Mahars and Jatois, the most common heirloom is not jewelry or land, but a photograph of a father or brother who never came home.

The Siege of Daily Life: For a mother in this region, a simple trip to the market is a tactical maneuver. Every motorcycle engine that revs too loudly causes a heart to skip a

beat. Every knock on the door after sunset brings the fear of a "revenge squad."

The Case for a Compassionate Intervention: Traditional policing has failed because the police are seen as part of the system that allows these feuds to fester. The people of Shikarpur don't need another "operation" that ends in a week; they need a shield.

To humanize the role of the Armed Forces, the intervention must be seen as a humanitarian rescue mission:

Breaking the Monopoly of Fear: The Army must establish a presence that is more accessible than the tribal Sardar. When a military post becomes a place where a common man can seek justice without being asked his tribe, the cycle of revenge begins to break.

Education as De-escalation: The Armed Forces should lead the "Schooling the Sindh" initiative. By providing security to teachers and students, the state can ensure that the next generation of Mahars and Jatois meet in a classroom rather than on a battlefield.

Economic Healing: The military's engineering wings can help reclaim the agricultural lands that

have been abandoned due to the feud. When a farmer can finally harvest his crop without a rifle slung over his shoulder, peace becomes a tangible, profitable reality.

The Tragedy of the "Jirga"

For too long, the state has outsourced justice to jirgas. But these councils often treat murder as a financial transaction. To the families involved, this feels like a betrayal. A human life isn't a debt to be settled with a fine; it is a void that never fills.

True peace requires the Armed Forces to act as the iron fist in a velvet glove disarming the violent while protecting the vulnerable. They must ensure that the "writ of the state" isn't just a phrase, but a promise that no child will ever again be handed a gun to settle a grandfather's debt.

A Plea for the Living: The soil of Shikarpur is stained red, not by the sun, but by the stubbornness of a system that refuses to change. As we look toward 2026, the question isn't how many more will die, but how many we will allow to live. The Mahar and Jatoi families are tired of burying their children. They are waiting for a power greater than their lives, regardless of their name, finally matter.

India should fear its own media

MUHAMMAD FARAN

The year was 1933, and the pivotal wartime president delivered his first inaugural address during one of the darkest periods in the history of the United States of America, when the great power was muddled in the Great Depression, facing a total collapse of its economic and psychological systems.

The point to take inspiration from the famous quote is to draw a parallel between two distinct yet similarly disruptive eras, the fear of fake news and misinformed media in the present-day world, India in particular.

While Roosevelt originally targeted fear as an unreasoning, internal barrier to economic recovery, today's digital age has replaced that internal sensation with an external, information-driven challenge: infodemic.

The Godi media, a term coined and popularised by veteran Indian journalist Ravish Kumar to describe biased Indian print and TV news media, is now recognised as the foundational architect of modern information disorder being spread by Narendra Modi's followers, thanks to modern technology, especially social media platforms.

But has this strategy paid dividends? The answer is a thumping no. On key issues like Kashmir, post-Pahalgam attack and the Bondi Beach tragedy, we witness India facing diplomatic isolation as the international community, particularly the West, is reluctant to accept its narrative due to inherent weaknesses in its initiatives and justifications. Delhi has launched a sprawling and occasionally contradictory set of goals and rationales to respond to the Pahalgam attack, including "setting a new normal". But the metaphor of a diplomatic prism dismantles India's disinformation warfare. This metaphorical prism helps the international community decipher the venomous propaganda into distinct, manageable components to understand its true intent.

Courtesy Tribune

Pak-Tajikistan PTA key to trade liberalization, targeting \$300m in bilateral trade: Ambassador Sarwar



PEAK POINT

DUSHANBE: Pakistan's Ambassador to Tajikistan, Muhammad Saeed Sarwar, stated that a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the two nations is a strong possibility, emphasizing trade liberalization's role in fostering regional economic integration. Bilateral trade could reach \$300 million in the coming years, with the

business communities of both countries playing a pivotal role in linking potential sectors, the Ambassador said during a joint interactive session with an eight-member Pakistani media delegation and local businessmen at the Embassy of Pakistan in Dushanbe.

He highlighted vast opportunities in the halal meat sector, noting Pakistan's planned export of 143,000

tons worth \$14.5 million to Tajikistan, which would expand trade in halal products.

On direct flights, Ambassador Sarwar stressed the importance of effective marketing and travel agents to ensure their regular operation.

He added that resuming these flights would boost economic and trade activities while promoting mutual tourism.

Tajikistan remains a key trade partner for Pakistan, essential to regional economic integration, he said.

Pakistan's envoy said that Central Asian nations like Tajikistan are vital for Pakistan, with both ready to deepen future economic and trade connections. The Ambassador pointed to Tajikistan's robust 8 percent annual GDP growth as evidence of its fast-expanding economy.

High-level visits continue, including Pakistan's Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

NDRMF to pioneer Pakistan's first Disaster Risk Insurance framework for climate proof resilience: Bilal Anwar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), Bilal Anwar has said that the Fund was evolving from a facilitating and funding entity to a catalytic fund leading on disaster risk reduction measures and climate resilience paradigm in the country. The fund is going to introduce the nation's first ever nationwide Disaster Risk Insurance framework to ensure climate proof resilience. The NDRMF has been serving the country since its inception as a facilitation vehicle and has accredited around 32 non-governmental organizations as fund implementing partners (FIPs) that have been trained, capacitated on system design and advancement of especially designed and first of its kind natural catastrophe (NatCat) model during two different training sessions that included specialized



training on the model, said Chief Executive Officer (CEO), NDRMF, he said in an exclusive interview with APP on Sunday sharing the recent development and initiatives being taken by the Fund. CEO Bilal Anwar said Disaster Risk Insurance framework development and initiative is the mandate of the Fund and is enshrined the responsibility to define the contours of different disaster risk transfer mechanisms including the Disaster Risk Insurance. "This effort is to facilitate and strengthen private sector finance-based funding streams to finance post-disaster.

IESCO posts landmark performance in 2025 through reforms, digitalisation: Khalid

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) recorded an outstanding performance across all sectors during 2025 by effectively implementing the reform agenda and digitalisation drive of the federal government and the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), Chief Executive Officer Engineer Chaudhry Khalid Mahmood said on Sunday. He said to provide quality, timely online and digital services to valued consumers, IESCO ensured region-wide rollout of the "Apna Meter Apni Reading" mobile application and the advanced 118 call line services following their inauguration by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Federal Minister for Energy, said a press release. Ch Khalid Mahmood stated that special emphasis was placed on the use of modern technology and digitalization to ensure transparency and timely services in customer services, operations, construction, grid services, and other departments. Elaborating further, he said that during the ongoing anti-electricity theft campaign, fines exceeding PKR 5.5 billion were imposed on electricity thieves, while outstanding dues amounting to more than PKR 6.99 billion were

recovered from defaulters. A total of 3,185 electricity thieves were arrested by the police. To safeguard human lives from electrical accidents, IESCO spent a substantial amount of PKR 2.16 billion from its own budget and secured more than 10,000 hazardous electrical points. Furthermore, state-of-the-art customer facilitation centers were established.

providing solutions to all electricity related issues under one roof. Installation of internationally advanced AMI meters has been completed by over 90% in Rawalpindi circles, which is a revolutionary initiative of the Government of Pakistan in the power sector. To further enhance the professional skills of officers and staff, various training sessions were conducted, and the best tools, equipment, and protective gear (T&P) were provided to line staff to ensure their safety.

Engineer Ch Khalid Mahmood reaffirmed the commitment to continue this momentum of excellent performance during the year 2026, so that IESCO maintains its distinctive position in terms of results within Pakistan's power sector. He also paid rich tribute to the dedicated efforts of IESCO officers and staff.

Tourist influx in Malam Jabba as Swat receives first snow of winter

PEAK POINT

SWAT: The first snowfall of the winter season has transformed Swat into a picturesque white landscape, prompting a surge of tourists to the popular hill resort of Malam Jabba.

Following a prolonged dry spell, snowfall in the upper districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa blanketed the mountains in a thick white cover, reviving the region's scenic beauty. As soon as the snow began to fall, a large number of tourists headed towards Malam Jabba to enjoy the chairlift rides, fresh snowfall, and breathtaking natural views. Families, including women and children, were seen enthusiastically enjoying the chilly weather and snow-covered slopes. The chairlift remained a major attraction, offering visitors panoramic views of snow-laden mountains and dense forests.

Tourists described the experience as refreshing and memorable, saying the snowfall added a magical charm to the area. Visitors from different parts of the country expressed.

Mustafa Kamal alleges Altaf Hussain orchestrated Imran Farooq's murder, funded by RAW

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: MQM-Pakistan leader and Federal Minister Mustafa Kamal has accused MQM founder Altaf Hussain of orchestrating the murder of party leader Imran Farooq and receiving funds from India's intelligence agency RAW to carry out terrorism in Pakistan.

Speaking at a press conference with party leaders in Karachi, Kamal labeled Hussain a "drama king" and claimed that he had collected millions of pounds in donations for sending Farooq's body abroad.

Kamal also alleged that Hussain exploited funeral proceedings for publicity and celebrated Farooq's murder on his own birthday, describing it as a



Muttahida Quami Movement

"gift" to himself.

Kamal further claimed that the alleged involvement of RAW halted the Scotland Yard investigation into Farooq's murder. He criticized Hussain for destroying Karachi and delaying constitutional and municipal reforms, stating that the MQM founder had caused immense damage to the Muhajir community over the decades.

"The so-called leader is a criminal and a traitor who can order killings at will.

Ambassador Asim Ahmed calls demise of global diplomats - Rafeuddin Ahmed & Shamshad Akhtar - 'big loss'

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: Pakistani Ambassador to United Nations, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, has described the passing of Rafeuddin Ahmed and Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, two of Pakistan's eminent international civil servants, as a "big loss to diplomacy."

In a statement, he said they were "Outstanding leaders", who made "Great contribution to the global objectives of peace and development."

Rafeuddin, a former Pakistan Foreign Service officer, who served, among other top posts, as Chief de Cabinet of ex-UN Secretary-General Kurt



Waldheim, passed away in New York on Saturday, aged 93. He is expected to be buried on Tuesday.

Ms. Akhtar, 71, a prominent economist and former State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor, passed away in Karachi. She also held high positions in the UN, including as the executive secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).



MULTAN: Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan giving a medals to students of Times university in the eve of convocation.

Govt, IT stakeholders urged to train cyber scouts against online crimes

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Cyber security expert Zubair Khan has urged the government to sensitize Information Technology (IT) stakeholders and launch structured training programmes to develop "cyber scouts" who could support institutions such as the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) and cyber police in eradicating the growing menace of cyber crime in the country. Talking to APP, he proposed the development of trained cyber scouts from universities and IT institutions, who could be deployed in coordination with NCCIA and cyber police to address

resource shortages. These cyber scouts, he said, could initially serve in training or internship-based roles and later be absorbed as professionals, creating a sustainable talent pipeline for national cyber security.

He said a large number of youngsters in Pakistan are increasingly interested in ethical hacking, which is a core domain of cyber security, but lack clarity about the proper pathway, courses and certifications needed to enter the field professionally. Zubair Khan said the absence of clear guidance has created confusion among aspiring IT professionals regarding eligibility, education requirements and inter-



nationally recognised certifications. He stressed that senior IT professionals, training institutions and policy makers must step forward to guide youth about structured learning routes so their interest can be converted into meaningful careers.

He clarified that there is no rigid educational threshold for becoming an ethical hacker, citing global examples where even teenagers have demonstrated exceptional cyber skills. However, he added that a recognised academic degree plays an important role as a

professional gateway, while practical skills, hands-on experience and continuous learning remain the real foundation of success. Explaining certification pathways, he said genuine cyber security certifications are vendor-based and issued after passing standardized international examinations, and should not be confused with local training certificates. Organizations such as EC-Council and Offensive Security, he said, offer globally accepted beginner-level certifications that provide a clear starting point for aspiring ethical hackers.

Zubair Khan said youngsters should first build a strong base in operating systems, network fundamentals and scripting languages, particularly Python, before moving towards specialised certifications. He added that most entry-level certifications require around 72 hours of focused study and practice, followed by formal examinations. Highlighting the need for practical exposure, he encouraged youth to engage in self-study, online labs, Capture the Flag challenges, hackathons and global cyber security communities to develop real-world problem-solving skills. Concluding, Zubair Khan said that with proper guidance from IT professionals.